

Teacher: Maria Rosaria De Paolis

Subject: English language and literature

School: High School - Liceo scientifico linguistico "Antonio Vallone"- Galatina (Lecce), ITALY

LESSON of 45 min. for a class of last year (6977 characters with spaces)

SUBJECT: History and citizenship in English language

Competences and skills:

- describing the main world historical events
- linking the local history to the great history
- master the language functions to express historical events
- using images and artistic items to suggest mood and messages of peace and brotherhood
- understanding the value of an international contest to improve our consciousness as good citizens

PHASE 1: *Brainstorming activity* (10 min)

The English teacher writes the word *WORLD WAR 2* on the e-board, then he/she asks the students to say keywords of the main events of WW2 and its protagonists.

Some students stand up and write the English words as a spider-gram.

In the meanwhile, the teacher helps to translate the new words and the concepts the students have already studied in their school subject Italian history.

PHASE 2: *Brief discussion* (10 min)

The teacher starts the conversation about: "Was the war made of tragic historical events and amazing heroic deeds of troops and armies? Or did it involve and did it change the populations' lives? How?"

In this part the students are asked to enter the world of all the European people who lived the war in different fronts and alliances, but they were united by the same sufferings.

PHASE 3: *The story of a family* (15 min)

The teacher tells the story of a local family in Salento (Southern Italy) which could seem invented, but... it is real...

GRANDPARENTS GRAND STORIES

"When the war broke out, Imma was about 15 years old. She was born on January 6, 1927, and lived in the small town of Lizzanello. Despite her young age, she worked to help her family.

Life was very difficult. The family was very poor during the WW2 years, even basic food was hard to come by, they went hungry. At the beginning of each month in Lizzanello, there were long lines for the distribution of bread and pasta, but rations were scarce. There was what they called *contrabbando*—smuggling—where the wealthier families of the town could afford

to pay those distributing the bread to get a larger quantity and then resell it to the poorer ones.

There was no work in Lizzanello, so she had to go on foot to the city of Lecce every day. The journey was long more than two hours to get there and just as long to return.

Planes were constantly flying overhead, and they all lived in fear. At night, they had to keep the lights off or close all the shutters. They had to stay indoors due to the curfew.

One day, in a sunny afternoon Imma was walking with some friends through the countryside of Lizzanello, when they saw an American plane flying over their heads. Soon after, they heard a loud explosion and decided to go and see what had happened. When they arrived, they saw the wreckage of the aircraft in the field, with countless cans of food scattered all over. It was like a gold mine for the girls, because they were starving. Despite this, none of them dared to take anything, afraid that they might be poisoned.

Then, on the way back, they saw something caught in the branches of a tree and moved closer... it was the corpse of an American soldier who had parachuted and had lost his life. It was a terrible sight!

In September 1943 Imma and other very young women went to work in Brindisi for the grape harvest season and were hosted by the Caiulo family. They were 15 in total: two parents and 13 children.

The girls slept on straw sacks. Their job was in the fields, but also to take care of the household and assist the wounded relatives of the Caiulo family who had been injured in the bombings in Brindisi.

It was during her stay in Brindisi that Imma met the man who would become her husband—Antonio, one of sons of Caiulos.

She saw him on her first day at the Caiulo house. She was at the door, and he was about to leave, when their eyes met: it was love at first sight.

Over time, they got to know each other better. He worked for an important company at the time, SACA in Brindisi. Shortly after, when he was 18, he was drafted into the Engineering Corps.

During the war, Antonio and Imma officially married in a simple church ceremony. They were very young, and soon she became pregnant. But shortly after, Antonio had to leave again. So, she returned to Lizzanello to stay with her mother for the duration of her pregnancy. Then, their daughter Maria was born.

Antonio saw her for the first and only time when she was a month old. He was overjoyed and proud of his little girl. But just a few days later, he had to leave again, this time for Civitavecchia, near Rome.

A terrible piece of news arrived on May 14th, 1943. That day the port and city of Civitavecchia were bombed by the Americans.

From that day, Antonio never returned home. He was declared missing in action, and his body was never found. His family never knew if he was on land at the port or aboard one of the sunken ships.

Imma became a widow at 16, with her daughter Maria, who grew up as a war orphan.

She never met her father. They only had a photograph of him.

Maria always spoke of him and told this sad story with pride."

Teacher's introduction: "Why have I given this story the heading "*Grandparents, Grand stories*"?

Because this story is real, it is my granny's life as a teenager. Imma is my granny, now she is 98 years old, and Maria is my mother. She has told me all these info about his life.

These are the pictures of my grandparents whose destinies were divided by the war.



Presentation of the aim of the contest: "*Grandparents. Grand Stories. The Closest Stories from World War II*"

It is a contest, organized by the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, in honour of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. The contest encourages participants to explore World War II history by uncovering family and local stories or firsthand accounts from witnesses. This initiative highlights the importance of intergenerational dialogue, offering a unique opportunity to preserve authentic memories before they fade away. By connecting with loved ones and learning about local history, participants can bridge the past and present, fostering a deeper understanding of identity and social awareness.

PHASE 4: Final message (10 min)

The students are invited to listen and read the subtitles of the song of the English timeless band Dire Straits accompanied by the voice and the guitar of Mark Knopfler: **BROTHERS in ARMS** (4:58 min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhdFe3evXpk&ab_channel=DireStraitsVEVO

The teacher asks: Write the most effective lines and what strikes you of this wonderful text. Which is the message the lyrics conveys about war?

Conclusion and final considerations.

TASK: The students should search for a witness in their families or relatives to create a product and share it in class for the next lesson.

Galatina, 15th March 2025

Maria Rosaria De Paolis